

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Island County Historical Society Museum
P.O. Box 305
Coupeville, WA 98239

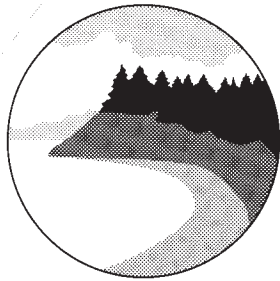
Washington State Parks
P.O. Box 487
Burlington, WA 98233

Trust Board of Ebey's Landing National
Historical Reserve
P.O. Box 774
Coupeville, WA 98239
www.nps.gov/ebly

Jimmie Jean Cook, *A Particular Friend...Penn's Cove: A History of the Settlers, Claims, and Buildings of Central Whidbey Island* (Coupeville, WA: Island County Historical Society, 1973).

Dorothy Burrier Neil, *By Canoe and Sailing Ship They Came: A History of Whidbey's Island* (Oak Harbor, WA: Spindrift Publishing Co., 1989).

Richard White, *Land Use, Environment and Social Change: The Shaping of Island County, Washington* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1991).



This publication has been made possible in part by Island County and Town of Coupeville 2% Hotel/Motel Funds.

Tour and brochure design: Sandra Strieby



Please pass this brochure on to a friend!

A BRIEF HISTORY OF WHIDBEY ISLAND

NATURAL HISTORY—The entire Puget Sound region was shaped by the Vashon Glacier during the last Ice Age. The glacier was enormously powerful, capable of moving huge chunks of rock. When a glacier drops one of those chunks, it is called a glacial erratic. There is one on Main Street between Coupeville and Prairie Center—it is bigger than a house! When the glacier receded, Whidbey Island was left with areas of very uneven topography as well as several large, shallow lakes. When the lakes dried up, they left behind areas of very fertile soil. While forests grew over most of the rest of the island, the prairies remained open, supporting grassland communities. The Reserve's three prairies are located in such former lake beds. The Reserve also includes several marshy areas and lagoons, which support a wide variety of wildlife.

NATIVE AMERICAN USE—Several Salish tribes used Central Whidbey Island for both permanent and transitory settlements. The cove's abundant shellfish were an important part of the Native Americans' diet. Penn Cove was home to three permanent villages and numerous temporary settlements. The Salish peoples maintained the open character of the prairies by burning them to encourage growth of food and fiber plants and provide forage for game. They also used fire to a limited extent in the forests to maintain berry-picking grounds.

EXPLORATION OF PUGET SOUND—Captain George Vancouver explored Puget Sound in 1792. Whidbey Island is named for one of his officers, Joseph Whidbey, who found the island and explored its coast. Many of the place names given by Vancouver or members of his crew remain in use today.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY SETTLEMENT—The first European-American settlers arrived on Whidbey Island in the early 1850s. Penn Cove was recognized as an excellent harbor, and the town of Coupeville grew up at the water's edge. Seattle had not yet emerged as Puget Sound's leading city; during its boom years, Coupeville was a contender for the title. The townsites of San de Fuca and New Chicago also struggled to attract commerce with the hope of gaining prominence in the region. The early settlers claimed land under the Donation Land Claim Law, which allowed pioneers to stake claims in Oregon Territory. The first settlers claimed the prairies, which were the easiest to farm. After the prairies had been claimed, later settlers took

land in the upland areas north of Penn Cove. Those lands proved more difficult to farm as they had first to be cleared of old growth timber—an arduous job in the days before mechanized equipment.

LOGGING—Much of the Reserve was logged commercially. Some of the logged areas were cleared for farmland, but they never produced as well as the prairies, and many of them were allowed to revert to forest. Other cut-over lands, in areas where the topography is roughest, were never farmed because they were simply too hard to work—they were very difficult and expensive to clear of stumps and logging debris, and the soils were too poor to enable farmers to make a decent living once the land was cleared. Much of the timber cleared from the island in the early days was shipped to San Francisco. Whidbey Island's sea captains grew rich supplying the city during the building boom that accompanied the Gold Rush.

RECREATION/TOURISM—City dwellers had long recognized Whidbey Island's beauty, and with the advent of the automobile Penn Cove became a popular tourist destination. Resorts, campgrounds, and summer houses sprung up along the waterfront, and Sunday drives became a popular way for visitors from the mainland to see the island. Recreation and tourism remain important contributors to Central Whidbey Island's economy.

THE RESERVE—Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve was established by Congress in 1978 "to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken historic record from the nineteenth century exploration and settlement in Puget Sound to the present time." It comprises 17,400 acres of Central Whidbey Island (including 4,300 acres of Penn Cove); its boundaries follow those of the original land claims filed by settlers in the 1850s. The basic patterns of land use have remained unchanged since European-American settlement in the middle of the 19th century. Development is still concentrated in Coupeville and the surrounding area; the prairies remain prime farm land; ridges are wooded; and the upland areas are a patchwork of wooded and farm land.

The Reserve is administered by a Trust Board composed of representatives of federal, state and local governments—nearly all local landowners—working cooperatively to preserve the scenic, natural and cultural resources of the area, without disturbing the community's way of life.

Ebey's Landing

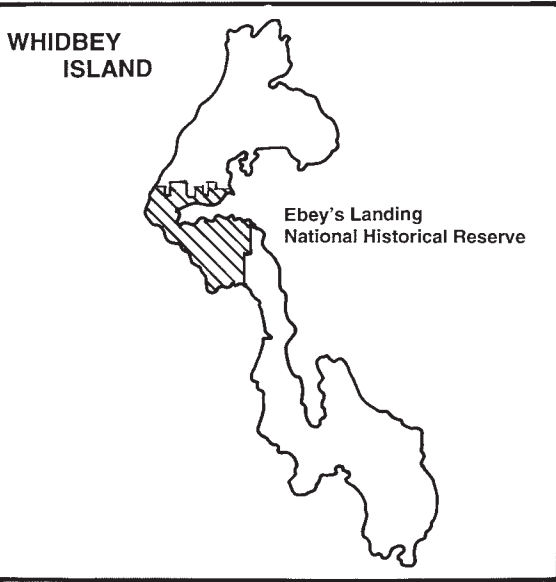
National Historical Reserve

A Driving and Bicycling Tour



WELCOME TO EBHEY’S LANDING !

Ebhey’s Landing National Historical Reserve is a unique place where history and natural resources come together to create a landscape of unparalleled beauty and richness. The Reserve’s scenery is magnificent — dramatic bluffs rise from the waters of Penn Cove and the Strait of Juan de Fuca to dense forests and pastoral prairies while lakes and lagoons mark the rocky shores. The woods and coastal areas offer opportunities for hiking, boating, picnicking, camping, bird watching, and a host of other outdoor activities.



But Central Whidbey Island is more than just a pretty place — it is a working landscape that reflects man’s relationship with the land over a period of thousands of years. People have had an important impact on the land, shaping landscape patterns and ecological relationships. The land has exerted its influence as well, rewarding human efforts in some places and foiling them in others. The result is a cultural landscape — a place that reflects the history of human interaction with the land. The landscape of the Reserve also tells the story of the people who have lived here—both the American Indians who first used the prairies and forests and the 19th century settlers whose houses, stores and farms are still being used.

WHILE YOU ARE HERE...

- Walk to Lake Pondilla. Its steep sides and fresh water distinguish it from the brackish lakes and lagoons in other parts of the Reserve, which were formed as a result of coastal processes.
 - Visit the beach. You can walk along the beach as far as Fort Casey (about 8 miles); check tides before departing! High tides can trap you between the water and the bluff.
 - Enjoy the mountain bike trails in the kettles area.
 - Explore the abandoned bunker and gun emplacement. As at Fort Casey, you will need a flashlight.
- Facilities include a picnic area, campground, bicycle campground, restrooms, trails.

Return to Coupeville along Hwy. 20. You will pass through the woodlands; the uneven topography is easily seen from the highway. **Mountain bikers** may return to Coupeville via trail from the park. This land was logged between 80 and 150 years ago — the tall trees you see are actually second and third growth forest!

